

The Brethren Evangelist

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT
The Brethren Publishing House,
ASHLAND, OHIO.

J. W. REER, Editor, Altamont, Cal.
J. D. McFADEN, Asst., Philadelphia, Pa.
E. L. YODER, Directors,
E. MASON, and
A. L. GARBER, Associate Editors.

The Editor and Assistant Editor hold themselves responsible only for what appears over their own signatures, the duties of acting editor resting upon the manager of the Publishing House.

Terms of Subscription.

One Copy one year, 1.50
One Copy six months, .75
One Copy four months, .50

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THE BRETHREN PUB. HOUSE,
ASHLAND, Ashland Co., OHIO

ASHLAND COLLEGE
SUBSCRIPTIONS should be paid to David Bailey, or to H. K. Myers, Ashland, Ashland county, Ohio. Send money either by drafts on New York or Chicago banks, express orders, registered letter or money order. Where it is convenient it may be sent to A. L. Garber.

ASHLAND, Ohio, Mar. 14, 1888.

The Rule of Correction.

New Lexington, Pa., Feb. 27, '88.

BROTHER GARBER:—As your correspondents mostly seem to hold forth the idea that we have no right to judge, much less to excommunicate a brother or sister. I am getting a little mixed up in the matter. Their arguments are indeed backed up by much scripture, but what will we make out 1 Cor. 5:11, 12, 13. Please give us your views on the subject and define the above scripture. Also what will the church do with a sister that violates 1 Timothy 2:9, 10, 11, 12.

R. R. K.

At the present we have not time to satisfy our correspondent; but as this question is a live one at present, it is due our correspondent to briefly define what our views are on the duty of the church toward disobedient members.

We do not stand with those who are witnessing against excommunication. Our views on the subject are that the church has a right to say that a foul and sinful man shall not be one of its number. We understand that Matthew 18th chapter, the rule of correction, means just that much. "Against thee," in the fifteenth verse was crowded in by the translators. So without it, it would read:

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone."

Practically just this much is meant. If any member of a church knows that another member is committing sin, he should privately talk to him; and if he will reform, all is well. But if he does not, then he should take one or more with him and talk to him again. Then if he will not reform it is to be told to the congregation. Then the congregation is to try the case and if he is found guilty, he is to be admonished, and if he will not then reform after a fair trial, he is to be counted as a sinner. In this proceeding the New Testament is to be the law, and if he is condemned according to the evidence and this law, he is bound in heaven, or in other words, the action of the congregation is satisfied in heaven.

Unless there is an abuse of power or an unscriptural expulsion, from one to five years are necessary to complete an excommunication. I believe when a man is scripturally expelled from the body of Christ, his fate is eternally sealed.

There is no occasion for crying down excommunication, for it is given to the church for its own glory and protection. So far as the church is concerned it means that the person thus treated shall no longer exercise his rights and offices as a church member and sit at the tables of communion.

All the scripture that has been produced and offered to prove that expulsion is wrong under every circumstance has not been properly studied with their context, and conclusions have been drawn that will strike numerous scriptural obstacles.

Whenever a member becomes to the church what a dead branch becomes to the tree, the only sensible way to deal with it is to cut it off. If one or two devilish creatures get into a church, it would be cowardice damnable before God to withdraw from them and abandon the fort and good work and leave the field.

We defend the right of churches to excommunicate. But we denounce the lynching and hanging style of dealing with erring brethren. There is no end to the abuse that has been made of the rule of correction, but this is no argument against its lawful use.

The scripture we must leave for some other time.

The Infinite God.

God is infinite. He has neither beginning or end. Long before the earth was created and the morning stars sang together he existed and his being never grows less.

God being infinite, his ways are also infinite and beyond the comprehension of man. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" was asked many centuries ago. The question has not been answered and cannot be. Man is certainly a part of God, and was glorious; but he made himself vulgar. God breathed into him life, an atom of his own infinitude. Man debased himself yet behold what he has done. One weak individual in Eden, disobedient too he was and lost his inherited greatness, yet he has wrought wonders. One breath of the Infinite is the begger of the human race and ultimately all the wonderful works he has performed.

Let us inquire further after this infinite that entered the clay in Eden and made it a living soul. That breath contained the inherent power of propagating itself without becoming less, and as a result countless thousands of men have been born equal in power to the original man in Eden. The inhabitants of Asia, Africa, Australia, the islands of the sea, the western hemisphere are all parts of that original speck of infinity called Adam.

That little part of God has wrought wonders in mechanics, in the arts, in invention, in changing the surface of the earth, and the courses of the deep. It has made wonderful buildings, learned the rules of chemistry and power of electricity. It would require an age to delineate all the wonderful things that man has performed, and as St. John said of the acts of Jesus, the world would hardly contain the books.

In man we have an evidence of what the infinite is. What then must God be, if only his breath is capable of such wonderful development?

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Our patrons are kindly pleaded to exercise some charity toward the paper and make allowances as the exigencies of the times would cease to merit. The EVANGELIST is published for the welfare of the church, and when the church has a pressing work to do the paper is sympathetically affected thereby. We are now engaged in a united effort in building up our educational interests, and the paper must suffer more or less in consequence of labors being directed in other channels. When success once crowns the labors in that direction, then the paper will be made better than it ever was before. We beg the sympathy and forbearance of all.

The young ministers who were in the graduating class are now in various parts of the country working in the interest of the College. We hope they will be kindly received and encouraged in their self-sacrificing work. It speaks volumes for the future success of our church to have such devotion shown for the cause of education and a church educational institution.

This section of the country is becoming notorious for its murders. Last fall one man was killed, several miles from Ashland, in a court room, and recently two officers of the law were shot in broad daylight while they were doing their duty. This tragedy took place about fifteen miles from this place. A wealthy father divided his hundred thousand dollars among his children and they quarrelled over it and about keeping the old man. Finally, several of the family took the old man from the custody of the one who was to keep him, and officers were sent to bring him back, and two were killed. Greed for money brings sorrow upon many.

We freely make this correction:

Editor EVANGELIST:—In your issue of Feb. 29th, you say the Danish Mission is now abandoned.—Certainly an error; for there are four live churches there, and a prosperous ministry full of good fruits. It is no longer needed. Bro. Hope who, through failing health has retired from such severe labors. Denmark mission is not abandoned. Please correct.

M. M. ESHELMAN.

McPherson, Kans. March 3rd, 1888.

We are glad to hear the news, that it is able to take care of itself, for if it were not, it would certainly have a hard struggle.

Bro. D. L. Miller, of the Messenger, also writes us that the Danish Mission is healthy. We are sure we are glad of this, and that there is one thing left to our credit. While we ought to have a church in every town of five hundred inhabitants in the United States and missions in all parts of the old world, there is even a bit of consolation in the fact that there are few little churches of our name on another continent. God grant that during the next quarter of a century we may do something to atone for our negligence.

The College Matter Adjusted.

The crisis has come; a debt of \$41,000 all due and creditors pressing was looming up before us. The German Baptist Brethren Trustees are all reliable. A joint session of trustees and ex-trustees was held and in all good humor and kindly feeling, after much counseling and planning, came to a settlement. Now brethren let us not say the German Baptists will take the College from us, for they had us in their power and could have taken it. But they don't want it, they say we shall have it. They assume the entire debt of \$41,000 and then turn the College over to us with a good title by paying back to them twenty thousand dollars giving us two years of time it needed to pay. We have about fifteen thousand dollars in notes and other obligations that we count good in favor of the College outstanding. Thus you see by making up five thousand dollars additional, the entire debt will be made. This we can easily do.

This College is not for financial profit; it is not for a few but for

the entire church. Let all lend a helping hand. Send in your subscriptions and other donations. By the first of May we must have 6,500 dollars to meet our contract, and as much more as we can make up will be taken and stop the interest. Send in your subscriptions and donations to H. K. Myers or to the BRETHREN EVANGELIST and it will be credited.

JOSIAH KEIM, Pres.

A Recipe to Discourage a Preacher.

Should any of the readers of the EVANGELIST have a desire to discourage preachers we recommend to them the following compound. We have never known it to fail. In fact it will do more than is expected. In connection with its discouraging effect upon preachers it will also greatly retard the cause of Christ and drive those who mix and administer the dose, into skepticism and spiritual declension, if not utter ruin. It will advance the cause of infidelity and make the arch fiend grin.

We know of a number of instances in which it proved quite effectual. Its devastating effects are to be seen all over the country. We could present the testimony of many living witnesses, but space and prudence forbid.

INGREDIENTS.

1st. Be sure to let the preacher see you in town (no matter if you live ten miles away) on Saturday, no matter how hard it rains or how muddy the roads are, care for neither cold nor heat. Tell him you are quite well, enjoying good health. Be wide awake and sociable.

2nd. On Sunday morning sleep late, so as not to have time to go to meeting. Be sure its too muddy to go, and it may rain again, (no matter if the sun is shining brightly) as there is a little cloud to be seen somewhere. Be sure and not feel well, have the rheumatism, headache, or feel a little tired or drowsy. This is a very effectual ingredient. You don't need to live over two miles from the place of meeting, it will be fully as effectual as though you lived ten, or as far as town.

3rd. Should you for shame sake attend church, be sure and sit with drooping head, even if you don't sleep, but if possible, sleep.

4th. Be sure and whine about the poor sermon, no matter if you don't recollect a single sentence the preacher uttered.

5th. Be sure and express a wish that Bro. A. had been there and preached, no matter if all your neighbors do know that so far as your piety is concerned, Bro. A's preaching would have as little effect upon you as Bro. C's has.

6th. Be sure that "distance lends enchantment" with you so far as preachers are concerned, be very desirous to have preachers from a distance. Pay preachers from a distance well, though you never give your home preacher a cent. Of course to keep up appearances feed your home preacher lots of "taffy," but don't pay him anything substantial, talk about his poor management in your good natured, (?) sly, cunning, smart, (?) winking and hypocritical way, among your neighbors, and above all things else give

strangers quite thorough information as to the above weakness of your preacher. Remember well, never treat your home preacher with the same civility (in any respect) as you do a stranger, be quite sure and not pay him so well.

7th. Make him lots of promises, but don't for a moment let him feel that he is anything else but a subject of charity, or that as a man of honor your promises to him should be kept just as sacred and as binding as your promissory note in the bank.

8th. Tell the preacher to just go unconcernedly ahead and study and preach, that you will do right and see to his wants, (you don't believe in a salaried ministry, you know) and then go about your worldly business, and forget all about your doing right, and the preacher's wants.

9th. Should the preacher call on you to pray (especially in public) don't you do it. Tell him you can't or that he is your servant and must do that duty for you.

10th. Should the preacher call on you for a word of testimony for Christ, be sure and excuse yourself on the ground that you have not the gift of talk, but as soon as services close let your tongue run quite glibly about the weather, your worldly business, or your preacher's or neighbor's shortcomings.

11th. Should you be called upon to donate for the support of the preacher's family, be sure and give sparingly of such things you don't want yourself. Should you be called upon the second time, [though months have passed] complain about the wastefulness of the preacher's family. This ingredient will cause that family to indulge in hateful disgust at your stingy and unfeeling soul, and drive it into infidelity, but what does it matter,—so your children are saved.

12th. In your daily life and conduct, give the lie to all the grand and manly truths your preacher preaches, and when your attention is called to your hypocrisy, laugh at the preacher for his crankiness.

N. B. Should the above compound not have its desired effect we have a few more ingredients to mix in. We charge nothing for the above, nor for any other ingredients still in our possession. You know preachers are accustomed to go it "free gratis."

W. J. H. BAUMAN.

Warsaw, Indiana.

I am very much impressed in the cause of Christ and his church at this place, as our class is weak, I believe 15 in number, but they are all willing to do what the Lord finds for them to do. We have prayer meeting every Tuesday evening and we enjoy ourselves very much, knowing that Jesus is with us. Beholding our chaste conversation coupled with fear. Oh what a glorious thought to know when there is but two or three that meet in his name, the name of Jesus, he will be in the midst of them. Thank God for that promise and that blessed spirit that keeps us from all sin, and knowing through all our trials and temptations God is with us.

He lives and works for those who love Whose hearts are kind and true. [him, For heaven that smiles above us, And waits our spirits too.